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Obama calls Karzai over Afghan shooting

'WASHINGTON (AFP) - US President Barack Obama called Afghan President Hamid Karzai yesterday "to express his shock and sadness" over a shooting in Afghanistan which a US soldier allegedly killed 16 civilians, the White House said.

In the phone call, Obama "extended his condolences to the people of Afghanistan, and made clear his administration's commitment to establish the facts as quickly as possible and to hold fully accountable anyone responsible," the White House said.

"This incident is tragic and shocking, and does not represent the exceptional character of our military and the respect that the United States has for the people of Afghanistan," the president said, offering his full backing for a US investigation "to get the facts as quickly as possible and to hold accountable anyone responsible."

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta assured Afghan President Hamid Karzai in a phone call yesterday that a "full investigation" was under way.

"A suspect is in custody, and I gave President Karzai my assurances that we will bring those responsible to justice," Panetta said in a statement.

The killing spree reignited debate here yesterday over the US exit strategy from a decade old war amid growing frustration and resentment in both countries.





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University of Aruba welcome guest lecturer Michael Amiridis, Provost U of SC

Continuing the process of Aruba achieving fuel oil independence and a sustainable environment and economy, University of Aruba faculty and administration welcomed Michael Amiridis, Professor and Provost of the University of South Carolina, who delivered a lecture of how his school is spearheading a movement of being an environmentally -conscious, sustainable university. The lecture took place in the U of A auditorium on Friday evening, March 9.

The policy of the U of SC to now construct dorms and learning halls that are self-sustaining in energy use provides examples that could feasibly be put in practice for an island such as Aruba. The school has a student population of 44,000 on eight campuses, more than 1/3 of Aruba's entire population. The main campus, in South Carolina's capital, Columbia, was one of the first in the U.S. to have a sustainability program incorporated into its plan. Future goals include the campus fleet being 100% alternative fuel vehicles by 2015, by 2013 they expect to have 120,000 sq. meters of green buildings, become a zero waste campus, and by 2050 reduce their green house gas emission by 100%. Interestingly, the environmental policies are at the demand of the students, "which I find very exciting," commented Mr. Amiridis.

A freshman year reading experience is "No-Impact Man" by Colin Beavan, which was made into a documentary, to motivate student involvement. A survey revealed it has, ironically, an enormous impact on raising environmental awareness among undergraduates.

Sustainability is also part of the curriculum, with 46 of 74 departments offering at least 1 sustainability course. Students can also graduate with a Ba-

chelors Degree in Environmental Science and Environmental Studies, and they offer a Masters in Environmental Resource Management. There are a 103 sustainability-focused courses offered at U of SC like "Environmetrics" and "Green Politics" alongside 216 sustainability-related classes, such as "Ethics of Food" and "Ecotourism."

Sustainability practices also regulate the 8 food centers that serve the school. While selecting their food, those that opt for Planet Change policy reusable dishes and flatware as opposed to waste-producing plastic and foam, receive a 10% discount on food purchase. Oil from the fryers is given to third parties to recycle into alternate



Provost Michael Amiridis
fuel while Pulpers and trash compacters are used to reduce trash volume.

Continued on page 2



Visitors from U of SC, U of A administrators and Minister of Finance, Utilities and Energy Mike de Meza



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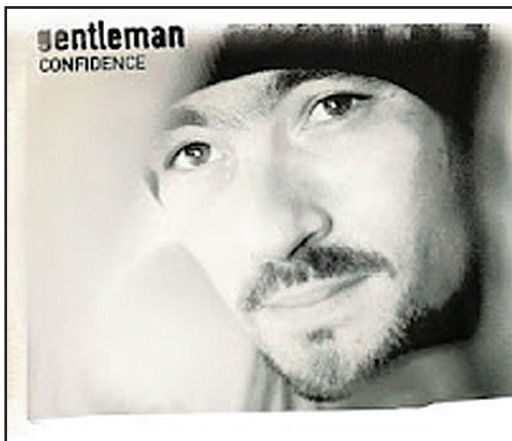
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Reggae great "Gentleman" on their way to Aruba!

ORANJESTAD - Elite Productions and Aruba Trading Company, MIO, Holiday Inn Resort and Insel Air have confirmed that the great, internationally renowned Reggae artist "Gentleman" is on his way to perform here on Aruba.



Gentleman is a popular reggae group from Germany. The Gentleman band is currently on tour in the USA and Latin America, with Aruba on their agenda for Saturday March 24th. One special feature is that the performance will take place on the beach on the site where Soul Beach was...the so-called "Surfside Beach" right next to the actual Nikky Beach. Local Aruban bands will also have an opportunity to share the stage with Gentleman.

The night with Gentleman will feature Honeypot, Mystical Connection and Time Bandits. DJ 101 will provide the music during the change of the bands. Tickets for the event are available at Valero Palm Beach, Blacksheep in the Main Street, MIO in Cayena Mall, Cd's & More in Cumana and at

Dragon CD in San Nicolaas.

The concert doors are scheduled to open at 7:00 pm with the event beginning at 8:00 pm.

Holiday Inn Resort will be the host hotel for Gentleman. The group will be staying in Holiday Inn's newly renovated rooms replete with Wi-Fi. MIO reported that they will be giving away various tickets to their clients and that their promo girls will be active during the concert.

Aruba Trading Company will also be present at the concert with 4 of their well-known brands...Hennessy Cognac, Label (5), Presidente Beer and Don Q Rum. They will also be introducing a new brand to hit the market during the concert.

This promises to be great music on the beach for all of Aruba's music lovers!

University of Aruba welcome guest lecturer Michael Amiridis ...

Continued from page 1

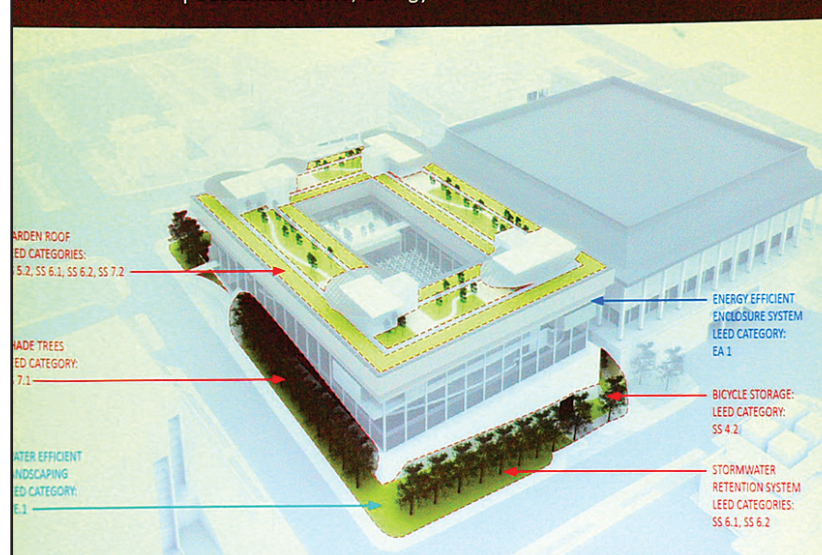
The kitchen also obtains 80% of their foodstuffs from local suppliers, reducing the use of gas to transport it from distant locals and reducing the carbon footprint by 5%-6%. State of the art dishwashing systems aimed at reducing water and energy consumption have been installed.

The school has initiated "car share" and "bike share" programs; autos are made available on a group basis, with students only having to pay for the hour or so they need to do their grocery shopping. This has shown it can severely reduce traffic and emissions around the campus; presently, 479, only a very small percentage of the students are registered to the new programs, so its full effectiveness is difficult to evaluate, but it has great potential.

Finally, Provost Amiridis pointed to the Darla Moore School of Business building, slated to be completed in December of 2013 and designed to be the largest LEED Platinum and Net Zero building in the world. This means the structure should produce as much energy as it consumes, which is usually subject to the vicissitudes of weather, where lies the real challenge; compensating for the interruptions to energy sources such as wind and sun, particularly in an area which is extremely hot and humid during summer.

University of South Carolina also maintains a research facility which includes a department dedicated to advances in sustainability and

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the environment. Enrolled in the Smart State program, administrators are using the allotment of state dollars to "create and fill centers that are energy and alternative energy focused".

Amiridis defined a Global Research University as an institution with innovative teaching, robust research and community engagement a priority, while deploying outstanding people in a culture promoting innovation.

We may be global, but one must never forget the local community. The assets the universities have are not the buildings, not the labs, or dorms, our greatest assets are our people: our students, our faculty and our staff. In order to achieve these 3 pillars we need to have outstanding people and we need to have an environment and culture that promotes innovation, brings these outstanding people into the university and lets them be innovative. If this happens, I am done; I don't have to worry about it, the administration doesn't have to worry about it, we just let them go."

During the Q & A, Amiridis admitted that seeing such practices put in place across the U.S., and beyond school campuses would not be realistically accomplished in the near future for such a large nation with such a diversity of climates. However, for a small country like Aruba, these innovations and ideas could be easily within reach. "An electric car cannot take you very far by U.S. standards, but one could easily traverse Aruba several times from a single charge," he observed.

At the end of his stimulating presentation he was presented with a gift by Dr. Ryan Peterson, head of Aruba's National Committee for Innovation and Competitiveness, and a member of the U of A faculty, along with Provost Glenn Thodé and Aruba's Minister of Finance, Communications, Utilities and Energy, Mike de Meza, who joined the audience to benefit from Provost Amiridis' insights.

by Rosalie Klein



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Aruba's Latin America marketing Budget increased by 6 million Florins!

ORANJESTAD -- Last Thursday was the official opening of the annual CATA Conference held here in the Westin Aruba Resort. Representatives of several Latin American countries were in attendance to discuss the possibilities for the continued growth of Aruba's tourism.

The government of Aruba has placed a major focus on the Latin American market because of the economic stability and the heavy demand from these countries to visit the Caribbean, and Aruba in particular.

During 2011 there was a 26.8% increase in visitors from Latin America to Aruba. From Venezuela there was an increase of 30.4%, Brazil was 10.8%, from Colombia there



was an increase of 13.5%, and from Argentina an increase of 62.2%. Efforts are being made currently to increase the existing flights to and from Latin America and to consolidate the new routes recently added, which includes the Latin American market.

According to the govern-

ment, one of their strategies is to continue expanding Venezuela with more connections and more local airlines such as Tiara Air Aruba, and Insel Air Aruba. Fly Aruba will soon begin flying between Aruba and Venezuela.

One of the priorities of the government is to get direct flights between Aruba and Sao Paulo, Brazil. This strategy will enable Aruba to get more airline seats and at the same time comply with the demand from Argentina and Colombia with flights via Bogota and Panama.

The government made proud reference to the Aruba Certification Program.

Continued on page 4

DPL urges employers to fill open vacancies when looking for personnel

ORANJESTAD -- The Job Center Department works with vacancies reported by employers and they send job seekers to apply for those positions. Normal vacancies must be filled with local people. Only when it has been proven that local candidates are not available, can the employer apply for a foreigner for the vacancy.

Open vacancies are directed to local or to naturalized foreigners who do not need a permit to work in Aruba. These vacancies are registered by DPL staff and are filled out on a specific form so that the Job Center consultants can begin the process of contacting registered job seekers.

Open vacancies can be sub-

mitted for whatever job function for which an employer seeks an employee. Currently DPL has a long list of job seekers registered in their data base that they can dispatch to apply to job openings.

Employers wishing to list open vacancies at DPL can do so by picking up the form for this purpose at their office, or they can download the form off their website: www.dpl.aw.

DPL encourages all employers who are not yet clients of DPL to begin making use of the services of this new Department and to begin enjoying the benefits of DPL, and so doing, also better serve our local labor market.

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Aruba's Latin America marketing Budget . . .

Continued from page 3

Minister Oduber considers this program very vital with respect to tourism associates (employees) who are being upgraded to improve the Aruba tourism product.

The tourism strategy plan, presented in December 2011, was highlighted in a speech by Minister Oduber. He mentioned the importance of an investigation which not only revealed our strengths but also the challenges that we may encounter and the ways to successfully deal with these and maintain our leadership position in the Caribbean region.

Mention was made of the various international events planned to be held here during the year 2012. In view of the successful year behind us with respect to the large number of visitors from Latin America, and in view of the economic challenges in the US and Europe, the government has recognized the potential for the Latin American market to grow even more. With these factors in mind, the government, together with ATA decided that it would be prudent to increase their investment in the Latin American market in 2012. Hence, the marketing budget for 2012 for the Latin American market has been increased by 6 million Florins.

"Laman" opens at Westin Art Gallery



Eefje and Jan with interim curators Michiko and Eduardo

A two-month exposition of the latest collection by noted island artist Eefje van der Straten opened at the gallery in the main lobby of the Westin Aruba Resort in Palm Beach. Eefje is a very talented and imaginative artist whose is continually surprising those familiar

with her work, but pursuing new techniques and mediums.

Her new show is titled "Laman" or "Sea" in Papiamentu, and is inspired by many aspects of the waters that surround Aruba, from flora and fauna to the unique marine landscape, which she



has interpreted in a diverse collection. Works encompass the varied moods of the sea, from bright and sunny, to dark and stormy in their color and use of medium.

The debut of this new show was accompanied with the announcement that veteran artist/curators Michiko Takatsu and her husband, Eduardo Valbuena, will be operating the gallery for the coming two months, and organizing the art show for the

upcoming Aruba Wine, Food & Art Festival.

The festival is a three-day treat at the end of May dedicated to all the cultural sensibilities, of which the art festival is an integral element. Until then, the gallery's newest show is on display 24/7 and interested parties can contact Michiko if they are interested in purchasing a piece.

By Rosalie Klein

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A picture perfect wedding on Aruba for Cheryl and Brendan—saved by the Bonny!



Best Friend Andy Sullivan officiates

For the new Mr. and Mrs. Brendan Nolan, a wedding in Aruba had always been a dream; they had visited the island in 2004 for a few days with her company and had been enchanted. When Brendan finally popped the question after 12 years together, they had

no doubts where they wanted to share the landmark moment with what turned out to be a very large group of friends and family.

Unfortunately, when Cheryl first came back to Aruba a year prior, to set up her dream wedding, it almost turned into a nightmare, as they found the original venue they selected was not what they imagined or what they wanted, at all. However, independent wedding planner Bonny Stanley of Aruba Weddings by Bonny came to the rescue with a suggestion Cheryl take a tour of the Divi Phoenix Beach Resort, and the tide turned in an instant.

“They were so disappointed, I am sorry to report,” recalls Bonny, “Cheryl was ready to cancel all her plans and choose a different destination, but I suggest we take a stroll along the beach and look over other options,”

“The moment I saw the Phoenix, I knew I found exactly what I was looking for,” enthused Cheryl, “then we met Room Manager Pedro Vargas and he totally won us over. We just fell in love with the place and there was no other where we wished to be married.”

It was a rather unconventional affair, with Brendan’s best



friend Andy Sullivan officiating, and the ceremony consisted of his amusing, anecdotal reminiscences of his long-time friendship with Brendan. The groom, originally from Boston, met his bride in Canada, when he pursued a career as a minor-league baseball player with the Newcastle Cardinals, where her brother was a teammate. Cheryl was a surprise to all his friends back home, but soon won them over for her humor and dedication to Brendan.

The ceremony was short and sweet, including blessings from Cheryl’s best friends Emily and Charlotte, with her BFF Natalie attending; Brendan’s best man was his brother Matthew. A day of intermittent showers made them nervous, but the skies cleared for a picture perfect wedding and a beautiful sunset for their special day; all’s well that ends well!

by Rosalie Klein



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Joe Kals, paraplegic, crossing France on crutches



FRANCE, Nice : Joe Kals, a paraplegic for 30 years, walks using crutches in the southeastern French city of Nice on March 11, 2012.

Kals, who has already traveled 224 km since August 2011, is attempting to cross France from north to south, linking the cities of Le Havre to Menton, to raise money to fund spinal cord research. A true journey of 1325 km.

Joe is paraplegic due to a motorcycle accident.
(AFP PHOTO)

Annan leaves Syria empty-handed as fighting rages



DAMASCUS (AFP) - Peace envoy Kofi Annan yesterday left Syria empty-handed after failing to secure an accord to end Syria's year-long bloodletting, as fighting raged in major flashpoints leaving dozens more dead.

The UN-Arab League envoy departed from Damascus at the end of a two-day mission during which he said he presented President Bashar al-Assad with "concrete proposals" to halt unrest monitors say has claimed more than 8,500 lives since March last year.

On the ground however, more than 120 people -- 47 of them civilians caught in the crossfire -- have been killed in two days of clashes between armed rebels and regular soldiers, mainly in the northwestern Idlib province stormed on Saturday by regime forces, monitors said yesterday.

Fighting also occurred on Sunday in the central city of Hama, the nearby province of Homs, and in the Damascus countryside, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Annan on his first mission to Syria to attempt to secure a halt to the violence, had emerged positive from talks yesterday with Assad, a follow-up to their first meeting the previous day.

"It's going to be tough, it's going to be difficult, but we have to have hope. I am optimistic," Annan told reporters, while stressing the urgency of finding a solution.

"The situation is so bad and so dangerous that all of us cannot afford to fail," the former UN chief warned, in response to a suggestion that dialogue with the government was futile.

Assad had insisted during their first meeting on Saturday there would be no dialogue until the "terrorist groups" he claims are fomenting the violence are disbanded.

Opposition figures in their meeting with Annan however were adamant that the regime troops pressing the crackdown on dissent must first return to barracks before talks can begin.

Diplomats at the United Nations in New York had expressed pessimism about the prospects for Annan's mission after troops poured into the northwestern city of Idlib late on Saturday just hours after his first meeting with Assad.

Annan told the media conference that he had on Sunday discussed with Assad ways to halt unrest in Syria.

"The realistic response is to embrace change and reforms," he said.

Sarkozy threatens to pull France from Europe visa-free zone

PARIS (AFP) - President Nicolas Sarkozy threatened in a key election rally yesterday to pull France out of Europe's 26-nation visa free zone unless the EU does more to keep out illegal immigrants.

Sarkozy, who this week said France had too many foreigners, made the threat at a mass meeting which he hopes will turn the tide against front-running Socialist Francois Hollande with just 42 days to go before election day.

The so-called Schengen passport-free zone must ur-

gently be overhauled to fight the flow of illegal immigration, said the right-wing leader, returning to a constant theme in his bid for five more years at the Elysee palace.

Sarkozy said unchecked immigration would put extra strain on social safety nets for Europe's poorest.

"In the coming 12 months, if there is no serious progress towards reforming Schengen, France would then suspend its

participation in the Schengen accords until negotiations conclude," he declared.

The Schengen area is home to 400 million Europeans who can cross borders without a passport. Once inside the area, illegal immigrants can theoretically move freely between the participating states. Sarkozy accuses some EU states of having lax border controls that let in illegals who may later turn up in France.

US air raids on Qaeda arms caches in Yemen

US drones bombed suspected Al-Qaeda arms caches in a hilly region in Yemen's restive southern province of Abyan yesterday, witnesses told AFP.

Six missiles targeted the suspected weapons hideouts in Jabal Khanfar, a hill overlooking the Abyan town of Jaar, which is controlled by Al-Qaeda militants, the witnesses said.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) controls large swathes of southern

Yemen, and has strengthened its position there since an anti-government uprising last year that ousted veteran strongman Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Air strikes by Yemeni and US planes on Friday and Saturday killed at least 33 suspected Al-Qaeda militants in Abyan and Al-Bayda province, south of the capital, in the first such action since a massive attack on the army, residents and local officials said.

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International News

Rogue US soldier kills 16 in Afghanistan rampage



The bodies of Afghan civilians allegedly shot by a rogue US soldier are pictured in the back of a van

ALKOZAI (AFP) - Sixteen Afghans including women and children were killed in their homes by a rogue US soldier in a pre-dawn rampage Sunday, plunging relations between the two countries into a new crisis.

"When Afghan people are killed deliberately by US forces this action is murder and terror and an unforgivable action," Afghan President Hamid Karzai condemned in a statement.

The American soldier entered the homes of civilians in the southern Kandahar province and killed 16 people including nine children and three women, the statement said.

It quoted a wounded 16-year-old, who was shot in the leg, as telling Karzai by phone that the US soldier entered their home in the dark, woke up his family members and then shot them.

"The government and the people of Afghanistan demand an explanation from the United States government of this incident," Karzai said.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force said it had arrested a soldier over the incident, and the commander, General John Allen, condemned "this deeply appalling incident".

He also vowed to hold "fully accountable" anyone found responsible for the killing spree.

"I cannot explain the motivation behind such callous acts, but they were in no way part of authorised ISAF military activity," his deputy, Lt. Gen. Adrian Bradshaw, said in a statement as the US rushed to offer condolences.

The US embassy in Kabul sent out an alert to its citizens in Afghanistan warning that as a result of the shooting "there is a risk of anti-American feelings and protests in coming days".

The massacre was the latest in a series of incidents that have badly frayed US-Afghan relations, complicating negotiations on a strategic partnership agreement between the two countries for when US combat operations end in 2014.

The treaty would likely

cover the legal status of any US troops remaining in Afghanistan to help Kabul with intelligence, air power and logistics in the fight against Taliban insurgents.

In Iraq, Washington abandoned its pursuit of a strategic partnership deal and pulled out all its troops, leaving no residual force, after failing to get Baghdad to grant its soldiers legal immunity.

Relations plunged to an all-time low last month after the burning of Korans at a military base near the Afghan capital, sparking anti-US protests in which some 40 people died and forcing US President Barack Obama to apologise.

During the protests, six American soldiers were killed when Afghan colleagues turned their weapons against them.

But there was no word on what might have motivated the soldier's actions in Kandahar.

An Afghan government official, who described Karzai as "very angry" over the incident, said the president had dispatched the army chief of staff to head an investigation.

Afghan resentment of US forces has also been provoked by a video posted online in January showing US Marines urinating on the bloodied corpses of slain Afghan insurgents -- an incident condemned by the Pentagon.

And in November, the ring-leader of a rogue American military "kill team" charged with murder for shooting civilians for sport was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison by a military panel.

Kandahar is a stronghold of Taliban insurgents fighting to oust Karzai's government, which is supported by some 130,000 US-led NATO troops.

Republican 2012 race 'mathematically' over: Graham

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Mitt Romney has all but won the 2012 Republican presidential nomination, top senator Lindsey Graham said Sunday, agreeing with the candidate that "mathematically, this thing is about over."

Romney has won 14 of 25 state-by-state votes that decide which Republican candidate takes on President Barack Obama in November, compared to eight wins for Rick Santorum and just two for former House speaker Newt Gingrich.

These victories have given Romney almost 40 percent of the 1,144 delegates needed to secure the nomination. He has 446 delegates, Santorum 199 and Gingrich 117, according to authoritative poll aggregator RealClearPolitics.

"Mathematically, Rick would have to win 75 percent of what remains," Graham, a senior Republican who serves on various Senate committees, told ABC's "This Week" program.

"He's done an outstanding job, Rick has, of starting with almost nothing and being a real contender, and Newt's come back from the dead two or three times," Graham said. "But mathematically, this thing is about over, but emotionally it's not."

Graham was speaking

ahead of two do-or-die contests for Gingrich on Tuesday in the conservative southern states of Mississippi and Alabama -- although the former House speaker has pledged to stay in the race until the bitter end.

The Santorum camp argues that if he can consolidate the conservative vote behind him, at Gingrich's expense, then he can still overtake the frontrunner before the race wraps up at the party's end of August convention.

"I think everybody believes, if I could just get a one-on-one with Romney, I could win this thing," said Graham.

"But if Romney does well, wins either Mississippi or Alabama and wins Illinois, then I think it's virtually impossible for this thing to continue much beyond early May."

Graham, who has yet to officially endorse any candidate, stopped short of calling on Santorum, Gingrich, or even veteran Texas congressman Ron Paul -- who has yet to win even one state vote -- to quit.

"It's Romney's to lose," he said. "And, quite frankly, every time he had his back against the wall, he's performed. And I like his chances, but the other two candidates have got to make that decision themselves."



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Health & Living

Egypt court clears army doctor in 'virginity tests' case



CAIRO (AFP) - An Egyptian military court on Sunday acquitted an army doctor accused of conducting forced "virginity tests" on female protesters last year, in a case that had sparked a national outcry.

Ahmed Adel was cleared of conducting the test on Samira Ibrahim, who brought the case against him, after the judge found the witness statements to be "contradictory", the official MENA news agency said.

The ruling comes "from what has been proven in documents and based on my conscience," the judge said according to MENA, adding that he had "not been subjected to any pressures."

Adel was accused of "public indecency" and "disobeying military orders", after the initial charge of rape had been dropped.

"It's a joke, a theatre," an outraged Samira Ibrahim told AFP after the ruling. "The fact that the case was in a military court is a disaster," she said.

Getting the case into court was considered a victory for

the female protesters who were subjected to the tests and had raised hopes of further trials of those accused of abuse.

"The ruling shows how politicised the military justice system is, and the lack of independence there," said Heba Morayef, researcher at Human Rights Watch's (HRW) North Africa division.

"The implications are far reaching and the hope that there will be any accountability for the military will be receding," Morayef told AFP.

The case arose from two complaints filed by Ibrahim, who in December won a case against the military which saw the court order the army to stop forced virginity tests on female detainees.

Ahead of the hearing, Amnesty International said the court's decision would "show if Egypt's military courts are prepared to offer any redress for female victims of violence by the army."

"Ever since this unacceptable episode, which is nothing less than torture, women pro-

testers have repeatedly faced beatings, torture and other ill-treatment at the hands of Egypt's army and security forces," the London-based watchdog's deputy Middle East and North Africa director, Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, said.

Last year on March 9, army officers violently cleared Cairo's Tahrir Square -- the epicentre of protests that had toppled president Hosni Mubarak -- and held at least 18 women in detention.

Women said they were beaten, given electric shocks, subjected to strip searches while being photographed by male soldiers, then forced to submit to "virginity tests" and threatened with prostitution charges.

An army general defended the practice at the time saying: "We didn't want them to say we had sexually assaulted or raped them, so we wanted to prove that they weren't virgins in the first place."

Sunday's ruling could also have implications for other cases filed by women against the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took power when Mubarak was ousted, for violence against them.

In December, a video of military police dragging a woman along the ground with troops surrounding her and kicking her on the chest, as well as another video showing military personnel beating a female protester sparked further outrage.

China frees 24,000 abducted women, kids in 2011

BEIJING (AFP) - Chinese police rescued more than 24,000 abducted children and women last year, some of whom had been sold for adoption or forced into prostitution as far away as Angola, officials said Sunday.

Trafficking of women and children is a serious problem in China -- blamed in part on the strict "one-child" policy, which has put a premium on baby boys -- and activists say the cases uncovered by police are the tip of the iceberg.

The Ministry of Public Security said in a report posted on its website that police across the country had rescued 8,660 children and 15,458 women in 2011 -- all victims of trafficking.

The ministry added that authorities had cracked nearly 3,200 trafficking gangs last year, including a ring that sent Chinese women to Angola and forced them into prostitution.

In November last year, it said, a special police team flew to the African country and detained 16 people accused of being involved in the ring, freeing 19 Chinese women in the process.

Police also discovered that more than 2,000 children had been abducted and sold for adoption -- a big problem in China where couples unable to conceive or wanting a son, or male heir, can adopt kids from any source.


In November last year, for instance, police in the eastern

province of Shandong broke up a human trafficking gang that bought babies from poor families and sold them on for as much as \$8,000.

In one scandal that shocked the nation, authorities in 2007 found that thousands of people had been abducted and forced into slave labour in brickyards and mines across China.


More recently, police said in July that they had freed 89 children in a crackdown on trafficking launched earlier that year.

Police also arrested 369 people in the operation, which aimed to break up a pair of "large criminal enterprises" involved in child-trafficking across 14 provinces, they said at the time.



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Iraqi 'emo's under threat amid brutal killings

BAGHDAD (AFP) - Iraqi teenagers widely perceived to be gay are being brutally killed in Baghdad with Shiite militias distributing lists of targets warning of further assaults, officials and human rights groups say.

At least 15 teenagers, described as "emo's" for their tight-fitting black clothes and alternative hairstyles, have been stoned, beaten to death or shot dead in the past month, medics say.

Human rights groups say the toll is far higher amid accusations of a cover-up by security forces.

Witnesses in the conservative Shiite Muslim bastion of

Sadr City in north Baghdad say a militia group calling itself the "Brigades of Anger" has posted leaflets naming 22 youths to be "punished".

Medical officials said at least 15 had already been killed in the past month, including seven who were stoned to death, five who were shot and one who was beaten to death.

In Western youth culture, the term "emo" refers only to dress and musical preference and carries no connotation about a person's sexual orientation. In Iraq, however, the term is widely conflated with being gay, which remains taboo in the conservative Muslim country.



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Sci-Tech

Thousands protest against nuclear energy in Germany



BERLIN (AFP) - Thousands of anti-nuclear protestors in Germany demanded a swifter end to the use of nuclear power Sunday, organisers said, on the first anniversary of Japan's reactor crisis.

About 3,000 people formed a human chain around the nuclear power station in Brokdorf in northern Ger-

many, and protests were also held at four other sites in both the north and south of the country, organisers said in a written statement.

"The half-hearted and much too slow nuclear exit in Germany must clearly be accelerated," they said.

Berlin decided last March to permanently switch off Ger-

many's eight oldest nuclear reactors and to close by 2022 nine others currently online in the wake of Japan's massive March 11 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Saturday lauded her country's decision to phase out nuclear power.

"I think that quite a large part of the (German) population is in favour of the phasing out of nuclear energy by 2022," she added.

Environment Minister Norbert Roettgen said Sunday that Germany was at the forefront of a move to both end nuclear power while promoting at the same time renewable energy sources. "Whether other countries take on our model also depends on us being successful," he said.

Obama calls for investment in clean energy



file photo- President Obama

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US President Barack Obama called on Congress Saturday to invest more money in clean energy technologies and end multi-billion-dollar subsidies given each year to oil companies.

"We should be investing in the technology that's building the cars and trucks and jets that will prevent us from dealing with these high gas prices year after year after year," Obama said in his weekly radio and Internet address.

The comments came as the president faced mounting criticism from Republicans, who have blamed his energy policy for spiking gas prices.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) predicts gasoline prices across the United States could average \$4.25 a gallon by May, up from over \$3.60 today.

Between 1998 and 2004, prices ranged from \$1 to \$2.

Prices vary wildly between regions, however, and last week, gasbuddy.com, a web-

site that tracks prices in all 50 states, reported \$5.09 a gallon at one Mobil and two Chevron stations in greater Los Angeles.

Given that 76 percent of Americans drive themselves to work, and a trip to the store can often mean a long drive to the mall, higher gas prices are a critical issue -- especially in a presidential election year.

The president said that under his administration, domestic oil production has been on the rise and the number of operating oil rigs has quadrupled.

But he argued the United States won't be able to solve its energy problem just by drilling more oil wells.

"But you and I both know that with only two percent of the world's oil reserves, we can't just drill our way to lower gas prices - not when we consume 20 percent of the world's oil," Obama said. "We need an all-of-the-above strategy that relies less on foreign oil and more on American-made energy - solar, wind, natural gas, biofuels, and more."

He noted that his administration had already put in place new standards that will make sure that American cars average nearly 55 miles per gallon (88.5 kilometers per 3.8 liters) by the middle of the next decade - nearly double what they get today.

The president also called for ending the \$4 billion a year in tax breaks that US oil companies receive each year.



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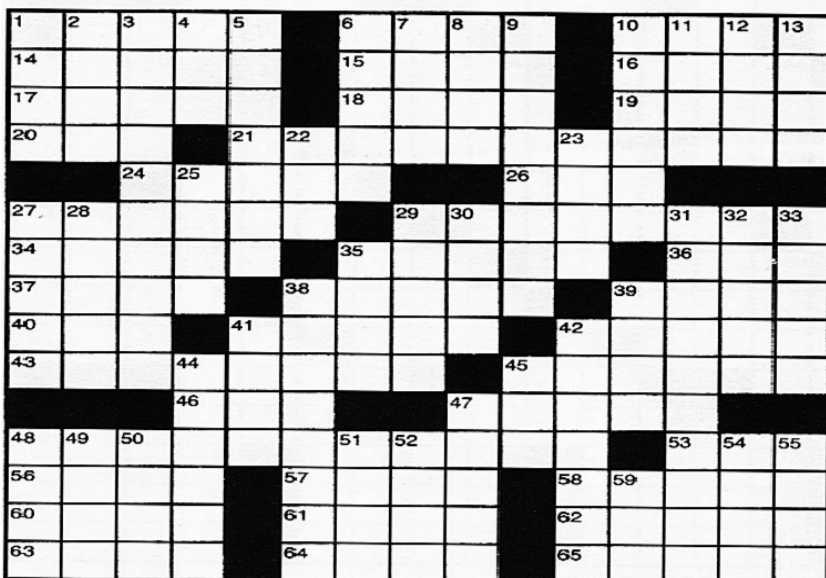
1. Vulcanized tire
6. Durango domicile
10. Viola, to Sebastian ("Twelfth Night")
14. Bikini or Tarawa
15. "Con" man?
16. Candy striper, e.g.
17. Type of cabinet
18. Fly like a falcon
19. Spot in the tropics
20. Relative
21. Junior high student
24. Fall guy
26. United
27. Gets a goal
29. Perpendicular

34. Like many a tattered binding
35. Holly Hunter film, with "The"
36. Regulus's constellation
37. Musicians' accessories, for short
38. Intuit
39. Like bald tires
40. Author Charles ("Meeting at Potsdam")
41. Sign of the '60s
42. "___ McKee" (1934 Joan Crawford film)
43. Storybook breakfast
45. Garner
46. ___ Khan

47. Brawl
48. Outstanding performance
53. Golf term
56. Chest rattle
57. Brainstorm's baby brother
58. Jonathan, e.g.
60. Fixes a squeak
61. Shift
62. Religious statue
63. Miniblind part
64. Olden laborer
65. Thurmond of South Carolina

DOWN

1. ___ of lamb
2. Vanity case
3. Movie theater appliance
4. Baba or MacGraw



OPERATION

5. Schemed
6. Radio host Kasem
7. Soon, of old
8. Sustain
9. Flying
10. Capital of Taiwan
11. Tuft
12. Like a benchwarmer
13. At no time, in poems
22. Tricky road curve
23. Atop
25. Mars, to the Greeks
27. Actor Terence
28. Gem carved in relief
29. Actor Edwards
30. Repose
31. Hayseed
32. Eagle's nest
33. Antisocial one
35. Wampum
38. Calming medication
39. Steam engine pioneer James
41. Oinkers
42. Ancient Persian governors
44. Most bleak
45. "My goodness!"
47. Show mercy toward
48. B'way hits
49. Icy precipitation
50. Spicy stew
51. Poems of praise
52. Striking end of a hammer
54. Singer's range
55. Paper batch
59. Stomach part, familiarly

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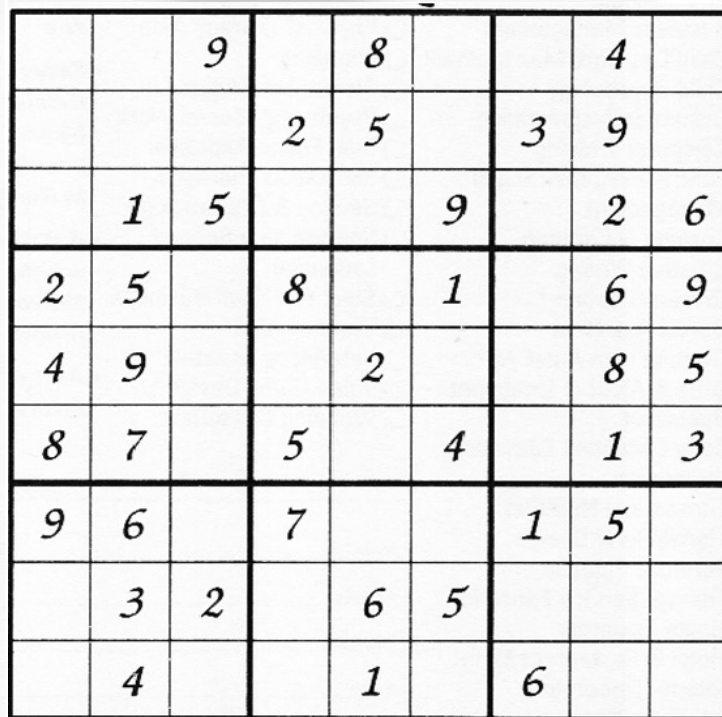
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8	7	5	9	2	3	4	1
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5	8	7	6	9	1	2	3
6	9	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	2	8	6	7	5	1	4
1	6	5	7	4	2	3	8
7	4	6	1	3	2	8	5

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.




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Source: European airlines join forces against EU carbon tax

PARIS - Airbus and six European airlines have written to several European leaders to attack the carbon tax imposed by the European Union, a source close to the dossier told AFP yesterday.

Plane maker Airbus, British Airways, Virgin Atlantic, Lufthansa, Air France, Air Berlin and Iberia have written to the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Spain to warn them about its economic consequences, said the source.

They argued that the tax represented an unacceptable threat to activities in their sector, the source added. Their initiative was first revealed late yesterday in the Financial Times.

It comes after the head of the Airbus parent company EADS said Thursday that

China had blocked purchases of Airbus planes by Chinese companies in reaction to the disputed tax.

Airbus was being subjected to retaliation measures, EADS chief executive Louis Gallois told reporters.

On Tuesday, the head of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) warned that the EU tax could provoke trade wars.


The carbon tax imposed on airlines by the European Union came into effect on January 1, but carriers will begin receiving bills only in 2013 after this year's carbon emissions have been assessed.

Carbon tax is a form of pollution tax. It levies a fee on the production, distribution or use of fossil fuels based on how much carbon their combustion emits. The government sets a price per ton on carbon, then translates it into a tax on elec-

tricity, natural gas or oil. Because the tax makes using dirty fuels more expensive, it encourages utilities, businesses and individuals to reduce consumption and increase energy efficiency. Carbon tax also makes alternative energy more cost-competitive with cheaper, polluting fuels like coal, natural gas and oil.

More than two dozen countries, including China, Russia and the United States, have opposed the EU move, saying it violates international law.

But the EU has said the tax will help it achieve a goal of cutting carbon emissions by 20 percent by 2020 and has insisted it will not back down on the plan. It argues that the cost for airlines is manageable, estimating that the scheme could prompt carriers to add between 4.0 and 24 euros (\$5.25 and \$31.50) to the price of a round-trip long-haul flight.




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Finance

Record year for BMW Group in 2011

MUNICH -- The BMW Group achieved sales volume, revenues and earnings records in 2011. Compared to the previous year, Group revenues increased by 13.8% to € 68,821 million. The total number of BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brand cars delivered to customers increased by 14.2% to a new record figure of 1,668,982 units (2010: 1,461,166 units). "The past year has been the best year in the BMW Group's corporate history. We have achieved new sales volume, revenues and earnings highs, and exceeded our targets", stated Norbert Reithofer, the Chairman of the Board of Management of BMW AG on Thursday in Munich.

The Automotive segment also reported record figures for 2011. Revenues increased by 16.8% to € 63,229 million (2010: € 54,137 million). The principal factors contributing to the significant improvement in segment earnings were the sharp rise in sales volume on the one hand and improved cost structures on the other.

The BMW brand set a new sales volume record in 2011, registering a 12.8% rise to 1,380,384 units (2010: 1,224,280 units). Sales of the BMW 3 Series remained high at 384,464 units (2010: 399,009 units; -3.6%) despite the model change. The new BMW 3 Series Sedan has been available worldwide since 11 February 2012. Sales of the BMW 5 Series jumped 39.4% to 332,501 units (2010:

238,454 units), ensuring that it remained the market leader in its segment. The BMW 6 Series, which saw the launches of the new Convertible in spring 2011 and the new Coupé in autumn, increased sales volume by 60.7% to 9,396 units (2010: 5,848 units).

The BMW 7 Series, the flagship of the BMW brand, continued to perform well, selling 68,774 units (2010: 65,814 units) in 2011, an increase of 4.5% over the previous year. The various models of the BMW X family also continue to enjoy a high degree of popularity. Sales of the BMW X1 rose by 26.4% to 126,429 units (2010: 99,990 units), while the BMW X3 more than doubled sales volume to 117,944 units (2010: 46,004 units). Sales of the BMW X5 climbed by 2.6% to 104,827 units (2010: 102,178 units), allowing this highly successful model to retain its title as market leader in the Sports Activity Vehicles premium segment.

The MINI brand was also able to achieve a new sales volume high in 2011. In total, 285,060 units of the MINI (2010: 234,175 units) were sold, 21.7% more than in the previous year. The MINI Countryman performed particularly well, with sales up more than sixfold to 89,036 units (2010: 14,337 units). The MINI Coupé was launched in September 2011 as the fifth model in the MINI family and had recorded a sales volume of 3,799 units up to the year end.

SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer

P	A	P	A	S	C	A	L	E	M	E	L	T
A	R	I	D	E	R	R	O	R	A	L	O	E
R	A	R	E	C	A	T	A	M	A	R	A	N
E	L	A	T	O	M	E	I	R	E	N	E	S
T	A	R	N	S	O	N	E	S				
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M	O	S	E	S	F	A	L	S	E	G	E	O
A	S	H	E	E	R	E	P	E	E	N		
L	E	I	S	H	R	E	D	S	E	A	T	S
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M	E	A	L	S	T	A	R	K	S	E	E	N
E	R	N	E	T	E	T	E	S	T	R	E	E

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Obama's transgender nanny remembers 'little Barry'



JAKARTA (AFP) - A transgender Indonesian man who shot to fame after it emerged he had worked as Barack Obama's nanny in the late 1960s wants nothing from "little Barry" but to meet him again some day.

TV crews and reporters have descended on the tiny concrete shack in an east Jakarta slum, where Turdi, 66, now makes a meagre living from hand-washing his neighbours' clothes.

"I am a big nobody, merely the help, so I expect nothing from Barry. But I certainly wish to see him again. Nothing more," he told AFP at his

home, which sits by a foul-smelling sewage canal.

Turdi said he has fond memories of eight-year-old Obama, his American mother Ann Dunham and Indonesian stepfather Lolo Soetoro, who treated him "like family" during the two years he worked in their home in the upmarket Jakarta suburb of Menteng.

"It's impossible he will visit me here in my rented room. And to travel to America is something that can only happen in dreams. God willing and with patience, we will meet again," Turdi said.

The White House has not made any comment on the nanny's reminiscences, but some of Obama's old neighbours, who still live on the same street 40 years on, said they knew Turdi and accepted him as transgender.

But during his time caring for the young boy who would become the United States' first black president, Turdi tried not to let on that he was transgender, never wearing women's clothes around him.

"I felt very free when I dressed like a woman, as if I had been released from prison. But I always appeared manly in front of Barry. He was too young to know about our world," said Turdi.

When I'd fetch him from school, his friends would mock me and shout 'banci, banci' But he ignored them and would just say 'Come on, let's go home'," said Turdi, who asks his close friends to call him Evie.

The students would also tease Obama over his solid build, and his hair and complexion, he said.

"His friends would call him names like 'Barry Negro' when they lost a football match, but he would just laugh. He always said 'You must be prepared to win or lose a game'."

Turdi said he was proud of Obama, the "ordinary black boy from a humble background who has become the American president".

And he said he believed the leader could help to eradicate "all discrimination in the world", including against transgender people like himself.

Bobbi Kristina Brown to get rid of Bobby Brown's name



Whitney Houston's daughter Bobbi Kristina Brown plans to change her name to lose her link to her father, Bobby Brown. The 19 year old, who will inherit her late mom's entire estate while her dad will receive nothing, told friends she will become "Kristina Houston." The report claimed Bobbi Kristina first pushed to change her name six years ago when her parents separated, but her superstar mom hadn't agree. Photo shows Bobbi Kristina with father on febr. 1st 2012.

Visit the Mario Hernandez shop for the finest in Latin American designer accessories



Cashmir shawl with suede fringe and applique

"It's all in the details," believes the owners of the Mario Hernandez shop in the Paseo Herencia Mall. "The fine handcraftsmanship and classic styling of the Mario Hernandez accessories have placed them in high demand around the world, and we are proud to have the only MH store on Aruba."

The cozy little shop can be found tucked away just across from The Cinemas ticket booth, featuring fine quality leather goods with a trendy touch, the best of the current Mario Hernandez designer collection. It also features a stylish selection of the designer's logo unisex shirts and stunning silk scarves. Our personal favorite was a cashmere shawl with MH 25th anniversary Chrysalis motif in suede appliques; the look and feel of it is simply gorgeous. Shawls and scarves perfectly combine with the buttery leather handbags and accessories for an ensemble fashion statement.

The Mario Hernandez collection encompasses luggage, handbags and wallets of every sort, with specialized functions. "Our men's accessories

are extremely popular; literally flying off the shelves," note the owners. In the two years since they opened their doors, they have found patrons are very impressed with the quality and style of the goods.

Just a short time ago, the design house created an extremely attractive new line featuring the art of William DeBilzan, noted American artist whose work is often seen adorning the chic homes of television characters; he has popular galleries in both Florida and California and his work is exhibited in over 28 galleries across the U.S. and Europe.

Mario Hernandez has been creating and designing products for over 30 years; his name is synonymous with manufacturing excellence and innovation in design. The store in Paseo Herencia Mall in Palm Beach is opened until 10:00 PM for convenient night-time shopping and boasts the latest collection of these timelessly styled accessories, each of them handcrafted at the Bogotá factory.

by Rosalie Klein



Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Malone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up

and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples.

high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange



Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV,

rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



SPORTS

Tennis: Djokovic, Wozniacki advance, Murray upset



Novak Djokovic of Serbia returns a backhand to Andrey Golubev of Kazakhstan.

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) - Defending champions Novak Djokovic and Caroline Wozniacki eased through their openers in the California desert while fourth seed Andy Murray bit the dust for the second straight year.

Djokovic has not made the same perfect start to the season as he did in 2011, but defeated Andrey Golubev in his first match of the ATP/WT Indian Wells Tournament for the second time in as many years on Saturday.

He easily beat the Kazakh qualifier 6-3, 6-2 in a 62-minute match -- two minutes longer than he took last year, when he went on to capture his second Indian Wells title.

"It was a good start," the Serb said. "We didn't play a beautiful match. There were a lot of unforced errors but it was the opening match and I am still trying to adjust to this court and get used to the conditions. Hopefully the next match will be better."

Murray failed to advance past his opening Indian Wells match for the second year in a row, losing 6-4, 6-2 to un-

seeded Spaniard Guillermo Garcia-Lopez.

Murray, who was ousted by American Donald Young last year, made 34 unforced errors compared to just 16 for world number 92 Garcia-Lopez in the one hour, 40 minute night match.

"I squandered so many chances," Murray said. "I was missing returns, had break points and that was it."

World number one Djokovic, who came into Indian Wells last year riding a win streak that he eventually stretched to 41 matches, is now 11-1 this season.

The lone blemish on his record is a defeat in the Dubai semi-finals last week to Murray.

But Djokovic, who won his fifth Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January, will not have to worry about Murray this time around.

Djokovic broke Golubev to go up 5-2 in the second set, winning the game when his shot struck the net cord and dribbled over to the other side, after Golubev had double faulted three times in the

game.

That allowed Djokovic to serve for the match and he clinched the victory on his second match point when Golubev failed to return the Serb's first serve in front of about 6,000 spectators at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Djokovic advanced to the third round, where he will face South African Kevin Anderson, who won his second round match in a walkover when German Philipp Kohlschreiber withdrew.

Both Indian Wells defending champions advanced in straight sets on Saturday as Wozniacki of Denmark kick-started her bid to become just the second woman to win back-to-back titles at the tournament.

Wozniacki broke Ekaterina Makarova of Russia in every service game to post a 6-2, 6-0 win.

"I don't like to be out there for too long if I don't have to," Wozniacki said. "I love grinding it out, but if I have the opportunity to finish it off fast, I like that."

Fourth-seeded Wozniacki advances to the third round, where she will face top Swede Sofia Arvidsson, who beat Monica Niculescu of Romania 6-3, 6-3.

Two other women's top seeds advanced as sixth-seeded Australian Samantha Stosur and second seed Maria Sharapova cruised through their opening matches.

Stosur, who made the semi-finals in Indian Wells two years ago, breezed past American wildcard Irina Falconi 6-0, 6-3.

The reigning US Open champion put on an impressive serving display, blasting four aces and registering an 83 percent success rate on first-serve points in the 48-minute match.

Three-time grand slam winner Sharapova dispatched Gisela Dulko in 66 minutes, winning 6-2, 6-0 in the night match. The 24-year-old Russian improved to 9-2 this season as she tries to regain the number one ranking in the world.

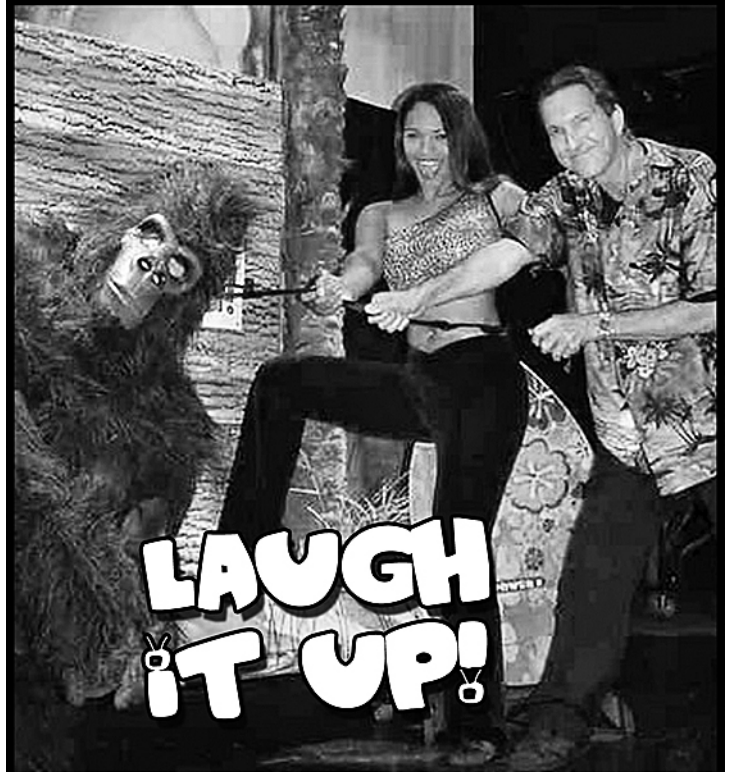
In other men's second round matches, Andy Roddick rallied to beat Lukasz Kubot 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 and Czech seventh seed Tomas Berdych beat Sergiy Stakhovsky 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 6-4.

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Injured Woods withdraws from 4th rd at Doral

MIAMI (AFP) - Tiger Woods pulled out of the fourth round of the Cadillac Championship at Doral on Sunday with an unspecified leg injury, a worrying setback less than a month before the Masters. Former world number one Woods, who could be seen limping during the round, left the course after 11 holes, went straight to the players' parking lot and departed. Woods, a 14-time major champion, hasn't won an official event on any tour since the Australian Masters on November 15, 2009. His return to top form since then has been hindered by injury, including left knee and Achilles tendon injuries that he suffered at last year's Masters. They kept him out of last year's US and British Opens, but he seemed to be on the upswing with a victory in the unofficial Chevron World Challenge in December, and he carded an impressive 62 in the final round of the Honda Classic last week.



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NBA: Warriors hand Mavericks another defeat

OAKLAND (AFP) - The Dallas Mavericks bore little resemblance to the team that lifted the NBA title last season as they fell to Golden State 111-87 on Saturday -- their third dispiriting defeat in as many days.

The Mavericks, facing a set of three games in three nights in the jam-packed schedule of the lockout-shortened season, couldn't come up with a single win despite facing three opponents with sub-.500 records.

On Thursday the Mavericks surrendered a double-digit lead late in the third quarter in a 96-94 loss at Phoenix.

On Friday it was Sacramento's turn to beat up on the champs, 110-97.

Golden State, led by the 21 first-half points of David Lee, seized their moment on Saturday and led by as many as 19 before the interval.

Lee finished with a game-high 25 points, while Nate Robinson scored 21 and Monta Ellis added 20.

In the second half, Dallas turned to NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Dirk Nowitzki and Jason Terry, but the Mavericks couldn't narrow the gap to less than seven points.

Terry said the tribulations were taking a toll on the Mavericks.

Golf: Tiger, McIlroy continued from page 16

Woods opened with three birdies in a row and added another at six before stumbling back with a bogey at the par-5 eighth. He started the back nine with a birdie, took bogeys at 12 and 14 but finished solid with birdies at 16 and 18, the last a four-footer after the closest approach shot at 18 of the day.

"I had it rolling and unfortunately made a mistake at eight and a mistake at 12," Woods said after signing for his 68. "Other than that it was a pretty good day."

Woods fired a 62 last Sunday to threaten eventual winner McIlroy at the Honda Classic and said he might match the best final-round of his career again.

"Bubba shot it," Woods said. "A lot of it depends on the wind. We will see. Hopefully tomorrow I can get it going again."

Football: Messi hits 50th goal continued from page 16



Racing were battling hard, and on occasions went overboard with crude challenges, but they had no match for Barca's movement and passing.

Cesc Fabregas had a shot well saved by the keeper before he set up Messi for the opening goal, with the Argentine sliding the ball home from the

centre of the penalty area.

Barca were knocking the ball effortlessly through the midfield but had to wait until the 56th minute to go further ahead from the penalty spot. Domingo Cisma was adjudged to have pulled down Fabregas and Messi sent the keeper the wrong way from 12 yards.

Racing were unable to respond and Barca could have extended lead with Juan Cuenca hitting a post and Messi for once having his shot saved when one-on-one with the keeper.

Champions League-chasing Valencia continued to stutter as they squandered a two-goal lead to draw 2-2 at home to Mallorca.

Valencia have now won just once in four games in the league and it is particularly their home form since Christmas which is the cause for concern as they look to maintain their third place, although they still have a four-point lead over Malaga, who beat

Levante on Saturday.

They dominated the first half with Tino Costa's deflected shot giving them the lead after 23 minutes and then doubled it three minutes before the break when Mallorca keeper Dudu Aouate made a hash of clearing a backpass, playing the ball to Ariz Aduriz, who slotted it home.

Mallorca had offered very little but got back into the game after 57 minutes when Emilio Nsue converted a through ball from Michael Pereira and then Victor Casadesus completed the turnaround minutes later.

Valencia had lost their shape amid whistles from the home fans and finished with ten men after Costa was dismissed for a two-footed challenge.

Espanyol and Atletico Madrid also kept in the hunt for a place in Europe with Espanyol beating Rayo Vallecano 5-1 at home and Atletico won 2-0 against Granada at the Calderon.

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Football: Messi hits 50th goal of season

MADRID (AFP) - Lionel Messi notched up his 50th goal of the season with a double on Sunday as Barcelona beat Racing Santander 2-0, but the Catalan club still remain 10 points off La Liga leaders Real Madrid.

After scoring a remarkable five in the Champions League in midweek against a reeling Bayer Leverkusen, Messi found the net in both halves, the second a strike from the penalty spot.

The Argentine has 10 more goals overall than Cristiano Ronaldo, although the Portuguese star leads the way in La Liga with 32.

Ronaldo hit a brace on Saturday as Real Madrid beat Real Betis 3-2 to maintain their surge towards a their first title since 2008.

Barcelona have now won their last four league games and coach Pep Guardiola says that they are bouncing back after having so many players sidelined.

"We have been playing well for a while, but we have had to suffer from a lot of injuries and while players have come in and done well, it still puts a greater strain on the team," said Guardiola.

"It was a good game from us and we managed well to pass the ball around but it is never easy against a side who have nine at the back. We also had to be wary of Racing on the counter-attack which we were able to do.

"As we were 13 points behind Real we just had to go out at 100 percent and give our best. Racing are among a group of teams that will fight to the end to avoid relegation and I hope they have a good end to the season."

Barca, without the injured Eric Abidal and suspended Gerard Pique, started with a three-man defence which included Carles Puyol who was finally passed fit.

They quickly began to dominate a struggling Racing side who have not won in eight matches and appointed Alvaro Cervera as the new coach last week to steer them to survival.

Messi had a free-kick tipped over by the keeper while Andres Iniesta hit the top of the crossbar with an excellent chip as Barca began to find a cutting edge.

continues on page 15

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Golf: Tiger, McIlroy catch fire but Watson leads at Doral

MIAMI (AFP) - Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy played their way into contention on Saturday at the Cadillac Championship but American Bubba Watson remained atop the leaderboard at the World Golf Championship event.

Watson fired a five-under par 67 to stand on 17-under 199 through 54 holes. He was three strokes ahead of England's Justin Rose and American Keegan Bradley entering the final round of the \$8.5 million event at Doral.

"I wanted to play good," Watson said. "I just tried to keep my head down and I somehow grinded out a pretty good score."

Watson, who fired a 62 on Friday to grab the lead, opened eagle-birdie, answered a bogey at the par-3 fourth with a bogey on five and had back-to-back birdies before closing the front nine with another bogey.

Birdies at the par-5 12th and par-4 14th and a bogey at the par-4 16th followed by a pair of pars closed out his round in mixed fashion.

"I'm looking at it as a positive," Watson said. "Two 3-putts, which is not technical or mental. I just didn't hit the speeds I needed to hit. I'm just looking forward to the challenge tomorrow."

Bradley fired a bogey-free

66 and said that was a greater feat than sinking six birdies.

"It's playing real tough out there," he said.

Rose, who ran off four birdies in a row from the eighth through 11th holes, closed with a bogey to fall out of the final pairing on Sunday with a round of 69.

Sweden's Peter Hanson was fourth on 204, one stroke ahead of Americans Matt Kuchar and Zach Johnson with American Johnson Wagner alone in seventh on 206.

McIlroy and Woods were next on 207 in a group that also included England's Luke Donald, Germany's Martin Kaymer, South African Charl Schwartzel and American Webb Simpson.

McIlroy, playing his first event as golf's World No. 1,

birdied the par-4 second on a chip-in and added another at the third, then ran off three birdies in a row from the fifth through seventh holes and dropped another at the ninth.

"I chipped in a birdie at two. That sort of got me going," McIlroy said. "To shoot 30 with two pars on the par-5s is pretty good."

When he eagled to begin the back nine and birdied the 12th, visions of a magical round of 59 to match the tour record crept into his mind. Bogeys at the par-4 14th and 16th ended that dream.

"I needed four more," said McIlroy, who posted a 65. "It's just a shame that I bogeyed 14 and I couldn't really get back in it."

continues on page 15

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